



F I N A L R E P O R T

**Preserving Quality of Life in San Rafael:
The Role of Economic Development**

A Report of the Special Study Session of
November 26, 1985

February 1986

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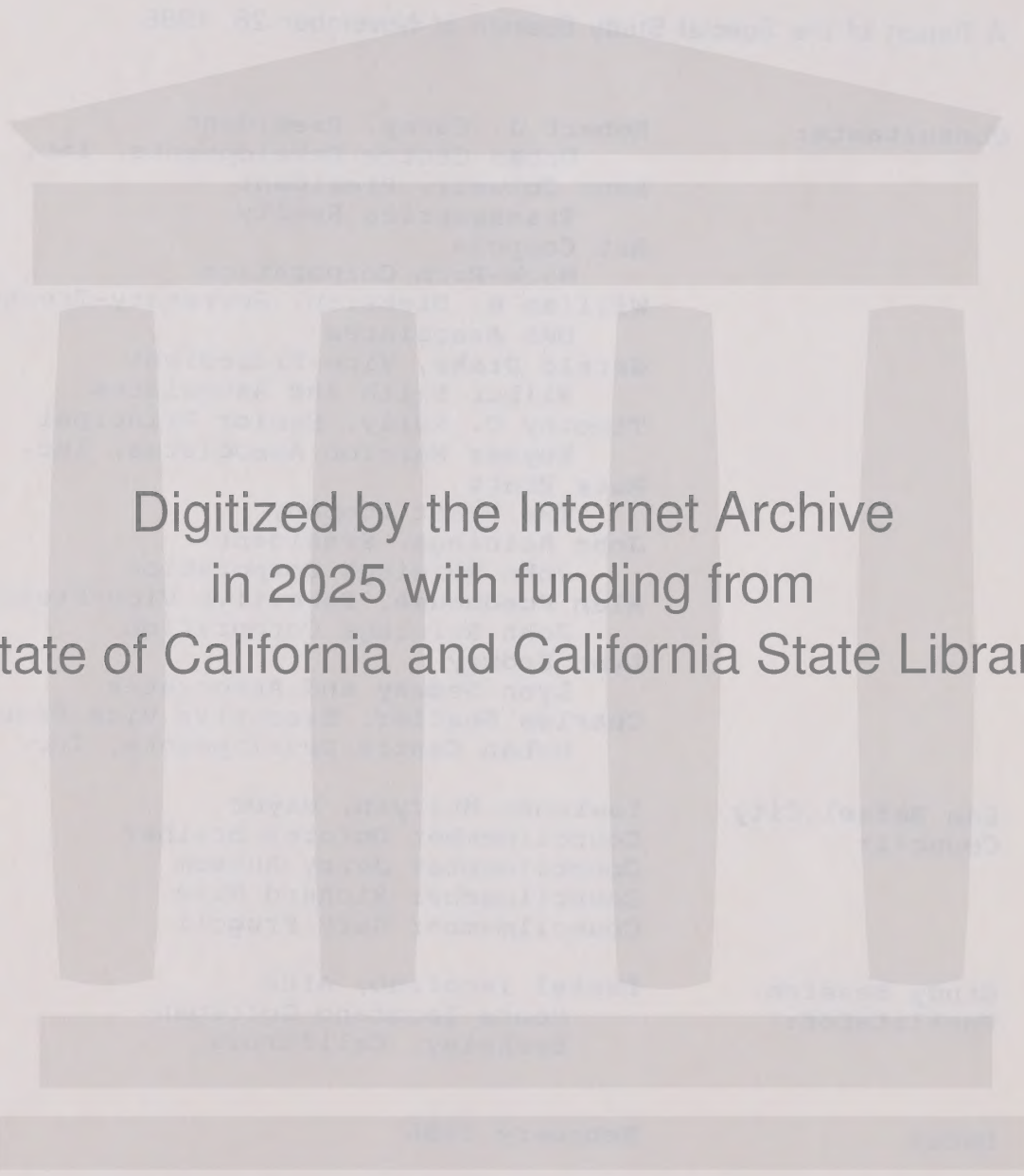
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

FINAL REPORT

Preserving Quality of Life in San Rafael: The Role of Economic Development

A Report of the Special Study Session of November 26, 1985

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Date:	February 1986



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Reference Material Provided To the Consultants
Before the Study Session

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the study session on "Preserving Quality of Life in San Rafael: The Role of Economic Development," held on November 26, 1985, at the San Rafael Improvement Club. Participants included City Council members, private developers, professionals who serve the development community, City staff and private citizens.

The objective of the study session was to explore the options open to San Rafael in preserving and enhancing the City's economic viability.

A prominent group of Bay Area developers and professional consultants who serve the development community, all of whom have worked extensively in San Rafael, were invited by City Council to participate in the Study Session.

The Session was organized around five general topics:


- I. General Economic Trends - National, State-Wide, Bay Area - Which Will Affect San Rafael Over the Next 5 Years.
- II. San Rafael's Economic Strengths, Weaknesses and Competitors.
- III. Economic Strategies Which Are Most Consistent With San Rafael's Quality of Life.
- IV. Public and Private Sector Roles in Balancing Quality of Life and Economic Development.
- V. Possible Next Steps (in the planning process).

The consultants were asked to begin each discussion topic with comments based on their professional experience, their knowledge and observations of the San Rafael area and the reference material which had been sent to them beforehand (see Appendix for list of references). Members of City Council then had an opportunity to direct specific questions to the consultants in order to spark further discussion.

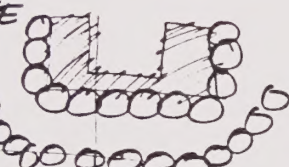
For the third topic on the agenda, members of the audience, which included San Rafael City staff and private citizens, were asked to participate in small group sessions. Each of the four groups presented their ideas about the qualities of San Rafael which must be preserved or enhanced through any future economic strategy, as well as a list of questions for further study and analysis.

All of the discussions were graphically recorded on large wall charts, which have been photographically reduced and included as illustrations in this report.

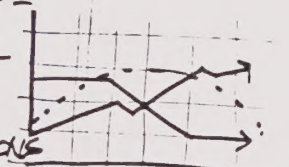
PRESERVING QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN RAFAEL
THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
A . G . E . N . D . A
11 - 26 - 85

8:30 COFFEE 

9:00 WELCOME!!

- ▶ STUDY SEMINAR PURPOSE
- ▶ INTRODUCTIONS
- ▶ AGENDA OVERVIEW 


9:30 I. GENERAL ECONOMIC TRENDS
- NATIONAL, STATE, BAY AREA -
WHICH WILL AFFECT SAN RAFAEL OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS



- ▶ CONSULTANT PRESENTATIONS
- ▶ GENERAL DISCUSSION

10:45 Break


11:00 II. SAN RAFAEL'S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES/COMPOTTERS



- ▶ CONSULTANT PRESENTATIONS
- ▶ GENERAL DISCUSSION


12:15 lunch

1:15 III. ECONOMIC STRATEGIES WHICH ARE MOST CONSISTENT W/ SAN RAFAEL'S QUALITY OF LIFE

- ▶ SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 
- ▶ GROUP REPORTS
- ▶ GENERAL DISCUSSION

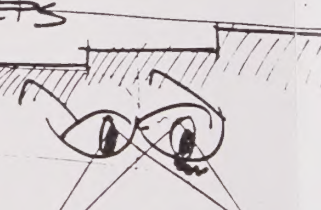
Break

2:00 3:00 II. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR ROLES IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE + ECON. DEVELOPMENT



- ▶ CONSULTANT PRESENTATIONS
- ▶ GENERAL DISCUSSION

3:30 IV. POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

3:55 WORKSHOP REVIEW 

4:00 Close

I. General Economic Trends Affecting San Rafael Over the Next 5 Years

The first part of the session was devoted to a general discussion of the consultants' views about current development trends. While this is not a definitive list, these were the main ones highlighted by the consultants during the session (for more detail, refer to the items listed in the Appendix). This section has been organized according to: (A) demographic trends; (B) land use trends; and (C) possible strategies for responding to trends.

A. Demographic trends

1. ABAG projections show **substantial growth in the number of jobs** in Marin County during the last few years. This trend is projected to continue.
2. While the general population has remained somewhat constant, there has been an **accelerated decrease in the school-aged population**.
3. The number of **"affordable" apartment units has increased**. However, there is still a shortage for "middle manager" types (based on study prepared by Lynn Sedway and Associates). Generally, San Rafael's housing is competitive within the region.
4. A **greater number of skilled women are entering the work force** (an increase of more than 50% has occurred from 1975 to 1980).
5. The **economic strength of the FIRE (Financial Insurance Real Estate) sector** will continue. The strength of this sector may counter the oversupply of office space since no real decline in occupancy rates has occurred.
- o The Bay Area will continue to provide a **strong economic base** relative to other parts of the country.

B. Land-Use Trends

1. **Retail uses** continue to be very strong.
 - Historically, Marin County has been under-served.
2. **The shopping center industry is thriving.**
 - Infilling and re-leasing of existing space are common.
 - More restaurants are locating in shopping centers.
 - There is a high demand for retail space in Marin, particularly for specialty stores, groceries and theaters.
 - Shopping center developments continue to emphasize ambience, specialties and other qualities which set them apart from competing developments (San Rafael is currently behind in shopping center development).
3. The concept of **"Managing Downtown"** (applying the methods used to manage and promote shopping centers to suburban downtowns) is a nationwide trend.
4. **Transportation** will continue as the prime consideration in land use planning in Marin County.
 - Shopping center development is linked to higher trip generation.
 - Many commute patterns are unpredictable.
 - Peak loads across the Golden Gate bridge vary considerably.
 - The number of people commuting to San Francisco has decreased slightly. However, the total number of vehicles has increased.
 - Transit demand is more diverse with high demand also occurring at nontraditional peak hours, which makes the development of transit alternatives more difficult.
 - Marin-based employment centers must be studied for their impact on transportation patterns.
 - It is critical that San Rafael be served by more than one mode of transportation.
5. **Increased office development** continues to be a nationwide trend. However, caution is advised due to uncertainty about vacancy rates and future demand.

6. **Hotel development** is currently a "hot" land-use nation-wide, which is characterized by heavy market segmentation. While overbuilding has occurred in some market areas, Marin County is currently under-served.
7. **Replacement of aging infrastructure** is increasingly more difficult and expensive.

C. Possible Strategies for Responding to Trends

The consultants discussed the economic implications of the trends listed above and proposed a series of strategies for consideration by San Rafael.

1. Downtown

- Conduct market survey.
- Develop overall strategy which targets land-uses that are consistent with trends.

2. Housing

- Retain housing in Marin County (a moratorium may be counter-productive here) as part of a strategy to reduce traffic to San Rafael based employment.
- Consider tax exempt financing.
- Evaluate the costs/benefits of providing higher densities of development, for example, higher density housing in the downtown.

3. Transportation

The success of growth location policies will depend largely on San Rafael's ability to effectively address the transportation problem. Otherwise, it will be difficult for San Rafael to remain economically competitive with other Bay Area communities.

For Highway 101, efforts should be concentrated where travel demand is highest. At this point, a multi-pronged approach should be applied with consideration given to the following:

- Increased capacities at selected portions of highway.
- Highway access (interchange) improvements
- Group Riding.
- Land Use policy changes.
- Transportation System Management (TSM) techniques.
- HOV lanes.
- Light rail.

4. Land Use Interrelationships

The interrelationships between transportation, housing, jobs in town and retail development must be recognized.

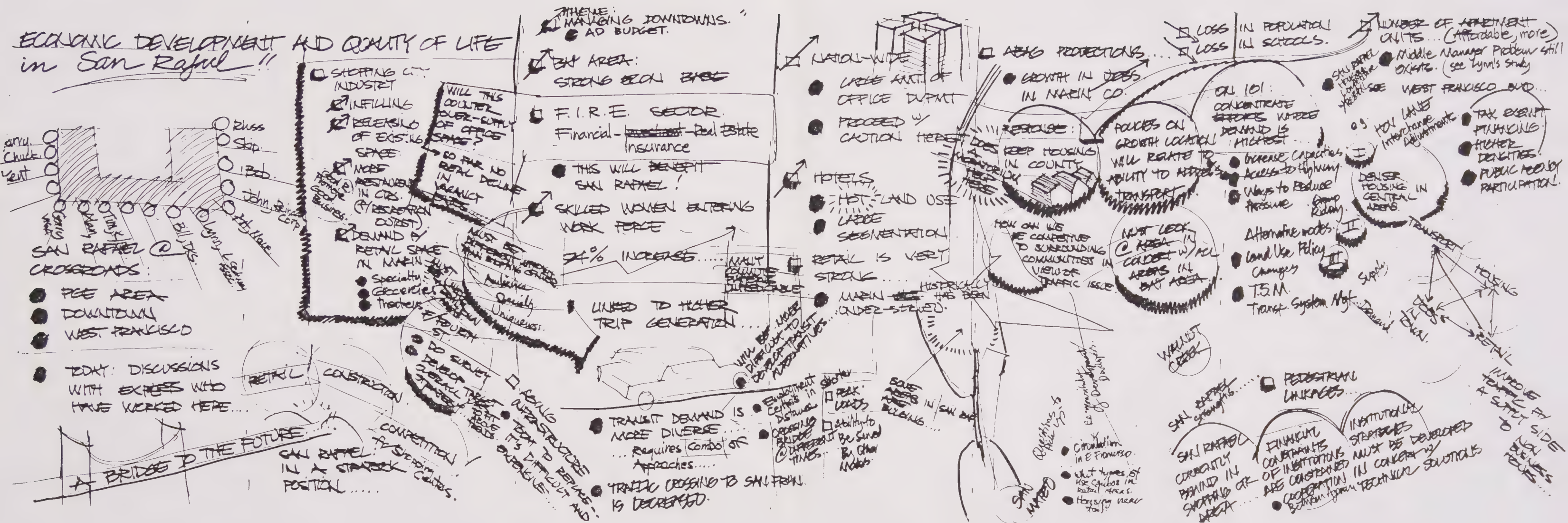
- Improve traffic from the supply side - shift traffic to non-business hours where possible.
- A combination of housing and office development supports retail uses.
- Improve circulation in the East Francisco Boulevard area.
- Investigate feasible combinations of uses for all retail areas within the City.

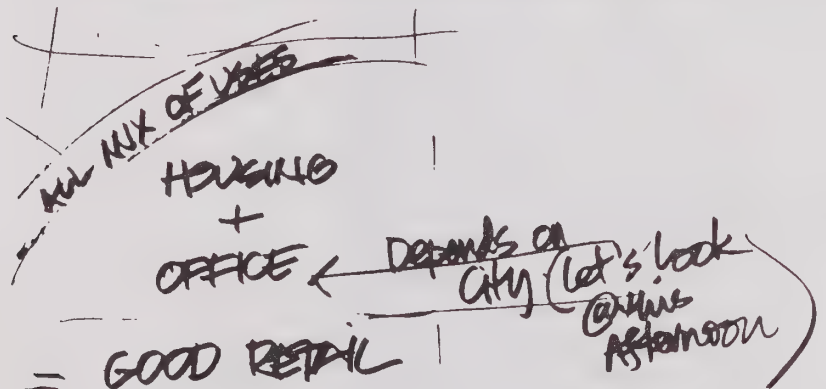
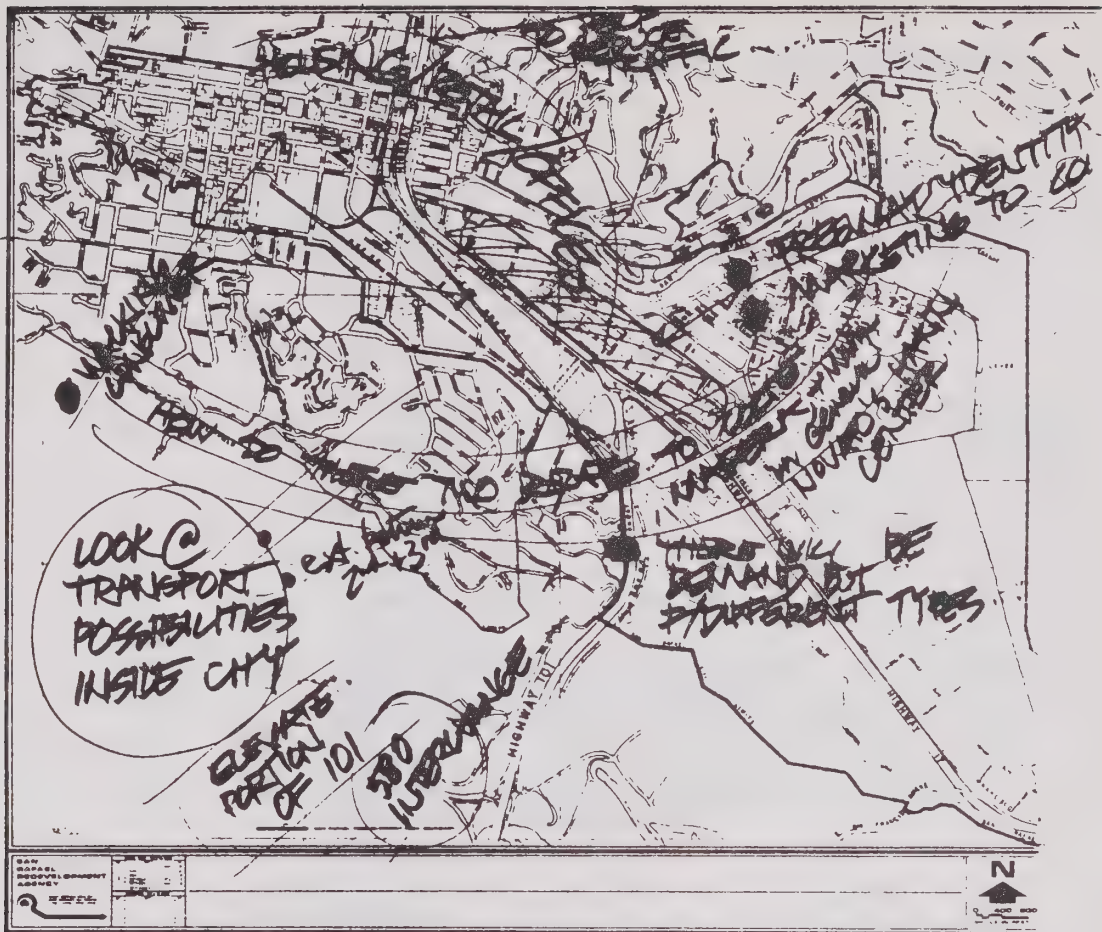
5. Institutional and Inter-agency Cooperation

Financial constraints of institutions make cooperation between agencies essential.

- Technical solutions by themselves cannot be effective; they must be developed in concert with institutional strategies. This is especially true when addressing the transportation problem.
- San Rafael's situation must be evaluated in relation to all communities within the Bay Area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE in San Rafael!!





General Economic Trends — National, State, Bay Area —
Which Will Affect San Rafael Over the Next Five Years.
(continued)

II. San Rafael's Economic Strengths, Weaknesses and Competitors

In the second portion of the agenda, the consultants identified what they considered to be San Rafael's economic strengths, weaknesses and competition.

A. Strengths

San Rafael's strengths which were identified by the consultants have been organized in two lists, those which are "community-wide," and those which apply to the Downtown.

Community-Wide

- Location in one of the great counties in the USA.
- Geographically, San Rafael is a population center in Marin County.
- Strong regional access - good transit point.
- It is a regional employment center.
- Economic diversity.
- Good weather.

Downtown

- The downtown has a pedestrian character; "it's real" - vibrant - an urban environment.
- Historical buildings give San Rafael a real sense of place.
- Macy's Store.
- Downtown San Rafael retains many lawyers and finance professionals who prefer downtown locations.
- A redevelopment agency has been established, with the power to assemble the desired retail tenants.
- A "walkable" downtown.
- Northgate Shopping Center (serves as a "downtown" for the Terra Linda area).

B. Weaknesses

Most of the weaknesses identified by the consultants pertained to Downtown.

- Small parcels.
- Multiple land owners.
- Soils problems.
- Difficult access from the freeway to downtown, especially during peak hours.
- Lack of convenient parking.
- Lack of signage to orient visitors, shoppers, etc.

C. Competition

- There are brand new and expanded shopping centers in the area (The Village, the Corte Madera Town Center, Bon Aire).
- Macy's may be attracted elsewhere if an opportunity arises to build store of larger size (the existing store in San Rafael is smaller than average).

D. Opportunities

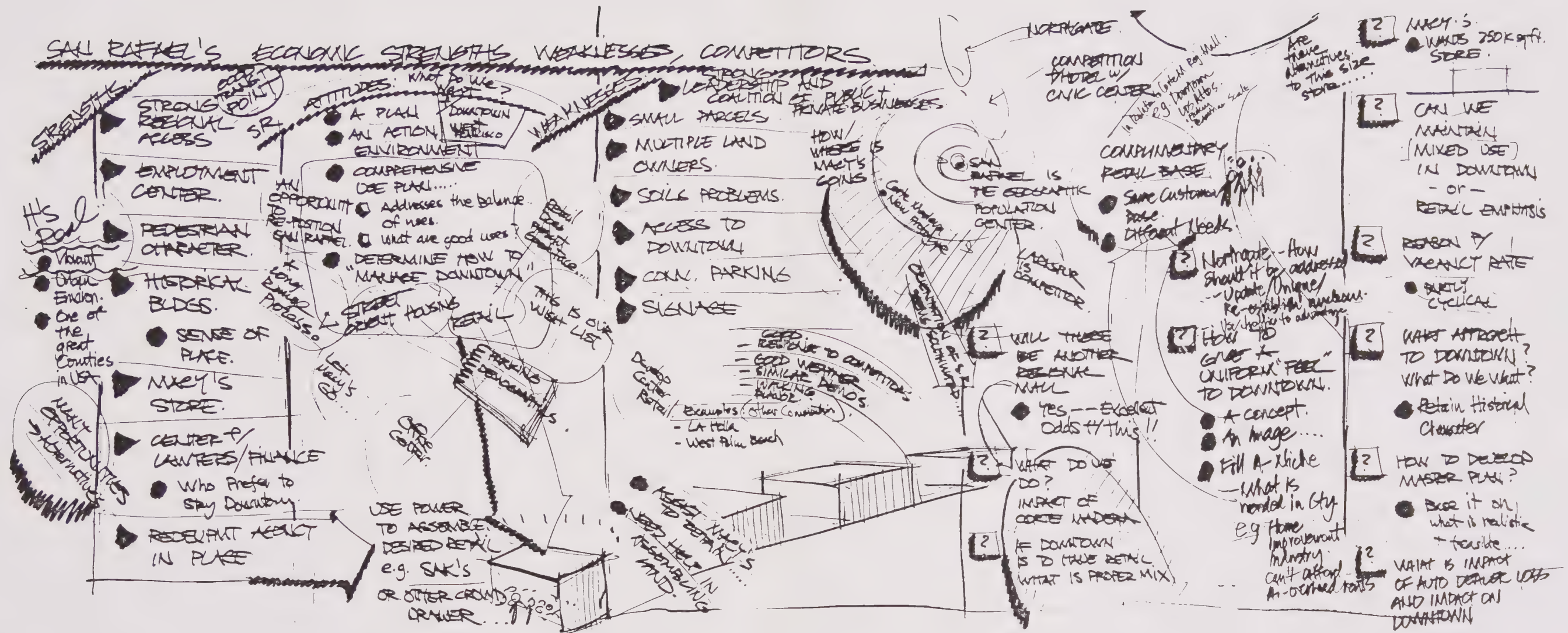
Major economic opportunities identified by the consultants refer to the general community and specifically to downtown.

Community-Wide

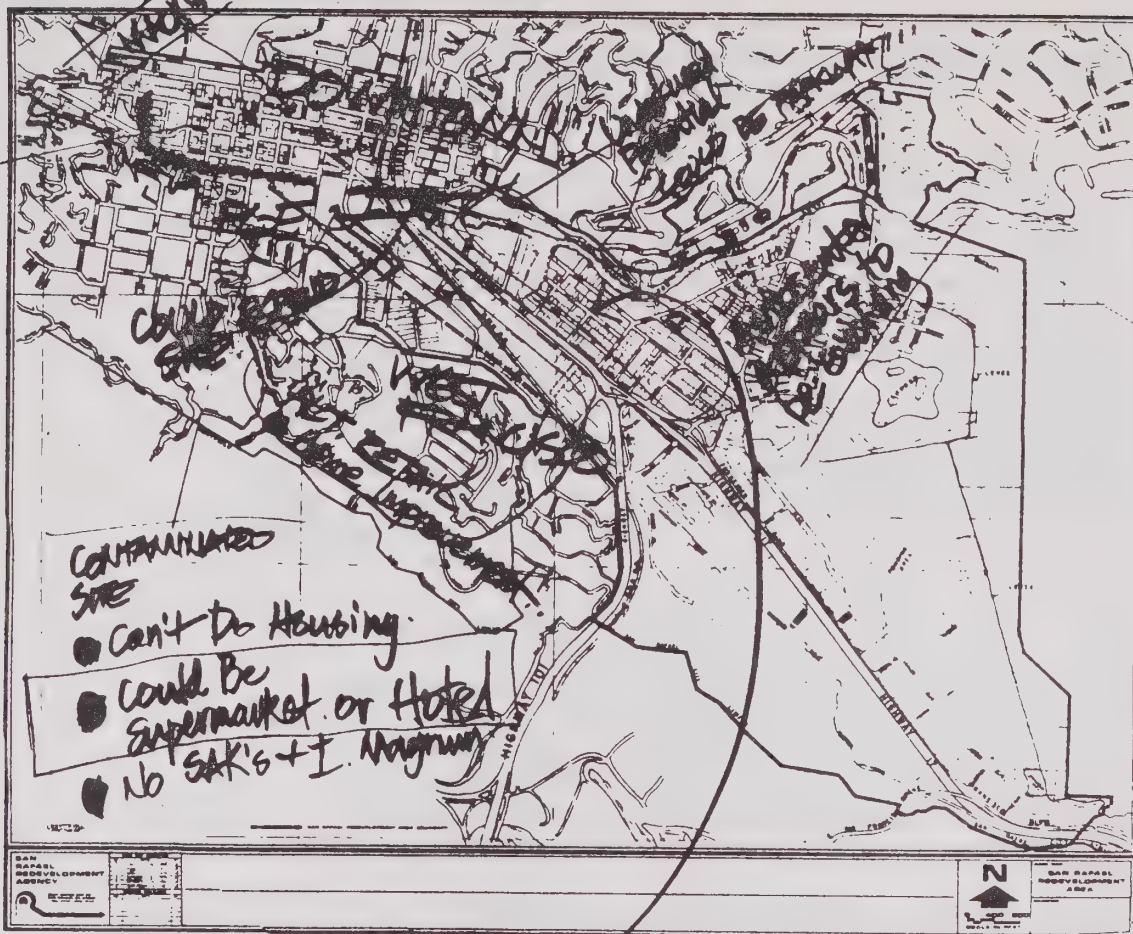
- The freeway image and orientation of the West Francisco area should be used to maximum advantage. Perhaps the auto center concept can be applied here. (Let's not loose those dealers!)

Downtown

- The approach to downtown should be outlined in a master plan which is realistic and feasible to implement.
- The plan for "managing the downtown" should address: street orientation; housing; parking; office center; plan for retaining Macy's; and a scheme for balancing desired uses.
- The plan will be an opportunity to re-position San Rafael's downtown within the region and to develop a complementary retail base.
- The Downtown's potential to serve as a retail center like those in the communities of La Jolla and West Palm Beach should be explored.
- Short term vacancies in the Downtown, due to normal economic fluctuations, offer development opportunities.



San Rafael's Economic Strengths, Weaknesses and Competitors



2. How important is skills tax?
- Use Auto Center concept to Address
 - Let's not loose those dealers

2. USE FREEMAN IMAGE/ORGANIZATION TO ADVANTAGE? -- How to?

San Rafael's Economic Strengths, Weaknesses and Competitors
(continued)

III. Economic Strategies Consistent with San Rafael's Quality of Life Goals

This portion of the agenda was developed through small groups comprised of City Council members, consultants, City Staff and members of the audience. Each small group addressed three topics: (A) the 2 or 3 aspects of San Rafael's quality of life which should be preserved or enhanced; (B) the economic development strategies which are most consistent with San Rafael's quality of life goals; and (C) overall questions about economic development in San Rafael to be addressed by the consultants in the study session or which may require further study and analysis.

A. Quality of Life Goals

The small group discussions from which these statements arose served as a useful background to the next round of discussion. It is recognized that this goals identification process must ultimately be carried out on a community-wide basis.

1. Diversity of Land Uses

- Maintain the diversity of old and new development.
- Preserve the current mix of land uses.

2. Transportation and Accessibility

- Maintain San Rafael's position as county "hub" with respect to goods and services, financial sector, housing, retail and office.
- Improve transportation along the 101 corridor.

3. Downtown Qualities

- Enhance the small town, family-style atmosphere which can still accommodate change.
- Maintain the "feel" of downtown San Rafael, especially with respect to open space, vistas, pedestrian scale and historical significance.

4. Municipal Services

- Continue the high level of municipal services including planning and recreation.

5. **Existing Neighborhoods**
 - Preserve the qualities of San Rafael's neighborhoods.
6. **Waterfront and Waterway Character**
 - Enhance San Rafael's shoreline, waterfront and waterway features.
7. **Housing**
 - Preserve and maintain existing housing stock; provide a range of affordability and variety.

B. Economic Development Strategies

Proactive City Leadership

1. An active, out-going City staff is an important part of this strategy. The City should take an active role in promoting community dialog and discussion on development issues in order to develop a plan.
2. The redevelopment agency should play a more aggressive role.

Plan Development

1. A Master Land Use Plan should be developed with a strong commitment to implementation in order to attract high quality tenants and retailers. The City may wish to consider: use of eminent domain; ULI process; HUD program; or use of special task force.
2. Alternative land use plans should be evaluated for all areas under study including West Francisco Blvd., East Francisco Blvd., the PG and E site and downtown. Example alternatives might include: large vs. small scale downtown; car dealers locations; and retail vs. housing.
3. The plan should address the question of the maximum height of buildings allowable in different parts of the City and the implications of various height alternatives. Height can provide more opportunities for mixed use (see Palo Alto or Walnut Creek for examples).

4. The site at 2nd and Lindaro Streets should be tied into Downtown.
5. Hotels might be considered for location in the Downtown.

Public/Private Partnership

1. The City should adopt an entrepreneurial stance and partnership role. It should do its "homework" before approaching developers with any concrete proposals.
2. Development agreements might be considered.
3. The development of a plan should be an educational process and a joint effort between the public and private sectors.

Retention and Recruitment of Compatible Development

1. In general, the consultants stressed that development which is compatible with San Rafael's unique qualities should be retained and attracted including such uses as:
 - Home improvement type business.
 - Upscale housing.
 - Offices relate to other uses such as bookstores, coffeehouses, coffee and gourmet stores.
 - Construction industry suppliers.
 - Northgate shopping center (which should be retained and enhanced).
2. Other considerations include:
 - Jobs/housing imbalance especially for city employees.
 - Living space: Where and how dense?
 - Additional retailers.
 - No auto-related uses in downtown.

C. Questions for Further Discussion and Study

1. Plan Implementation

- How can the ideas discussed in the Study Session best be implemented?
- Should the City consider use of its power of eminent domain to implement plans?
- Can any plan work without an effective transit system?
- Can a group similar to those who have gathered here for the study session become part of the formal plan development process?

2. Projections

- How reliable are projections?
- How serious are the Bank of America projections?

3. Private/Public Partnerships

- To what degree were the La Jolla and Los Altos plans a result of private and public sector collaboration?
- What are some examples of leadership (from other communities) in public/private sector collaboration?

4. Downtown

- How can San Rafael's "urban" character be identified and enhanced?
- Which blocks of the City are to officially considered "Downtown?"
- How can a uniform "feel" be given to downtown?
- Can Macy's be retained along with an additional major retailer? Are there alternatives to the average 250,000 square feet store?
- What other retail uses are appropriate for downtown?
- What is the proper mix of retail for downtown?
- Which uses would thrive downtown?
- How beneficial are office uses to the City's tax revenue base?
- What is the potential for housing at different income levels and its impact on vitality of downtown retail?
- How can San Rafael provide other needed services such as child care?

5. Shopping Center Developments

- What will be the effects of another regional mall in Marin County (given that the odds are excellent for this occurring)?
- What will be the impact of the Corte Madera shopping center in San Rafael?
- How should Northgate be refurbished in order to remain competitive?

IV. Public and Private Sector Roles in Balancing Quality of Life and Economic Development

This portion of the agenda was devoted to a general discussion about how the public and private sectors could potentially collaborate in the planning process. The items in parentheses indicate actions being taken by the City at the time of this writing.

Public Sector Role

- A. This type of study session signals the private sector, and helps provide an idea of the level of private sector participation the public sector desires.
- B. The Master Plan should recognize San Rafael's position as a point of major activity. How can this opportunity best be captured?

(A General Plan Revision is now underway with a major focus on Downtown.)

- C. An entrepreneurial attitude must be adopted by the public sector.
- D. A cooperative transit strategy should be considered for downtown.
- E. Special assessment districts may be appropriate. Compare San Rafael with other cities. Equitable assessment fees must be determined to achieve an equitable distribution of costs and benefits. This might be accomplished through a combination of real estate and economics. Can a blanket fee be used?

(An expanded Business Improvement District is currently being developed.)

- F. Maintain control over tenants and uses - concentrate on Fourth Street.
- G. The economics of private sector development must be clearly understood.
- H. Talk to other cities - Los Altos, San Diego, Palo Alto - about development concepts which they have applied.

- I. Think in the broadest terms about private and public participation. Seize this unique opportunity for San Rafael. Study activities and legislative acts which could support partnerships and initiate a process for exploring partnership options.
- J. Bring employers together to facilitate transit problem solving - develop a systematic approach.

(Transportation Systems Management programs are currently being developed with local businesses.)

- M. Pursue joint marketing efforts for the downtown, e.g., a nonprofit association which might sponsor special downtown events. All parts of the community benefit from a strong, vital downtown.

(An expanded Business Improvement District is currently being developed.)

Private Sector Role

- A. All projects must address the traffic issue, since they all contribute to the problem.
- B. A nonprofit business association might be created as one approach to downtown management. It might initiate promotional activities complete with graphics and advertising.
- C. Brings the marketplace to the community through sound market research.
- D. Reposition Northgate to regain excitement; provide alternative retail uses there. A successful Northgate will help minimize traffic and thus indirectly support downtown.

V. Possible Next Steps

The Study Session concluded with a final discussion of the next steps the City might take in pursuing the ideas presented.

- A. Develop an interim guidelines and policies document.

(The current development pause makes this step unnecessary and efforts are now being directed toward completion of a master plan.)

- B. Develop draft Master Plan using existing resources.
 - 1. Facilitate greater community involvement.
 - 2. Define key issues.
 - 3. Specify goals, objectives and action plan.
 - 4. Don't "nickel and dime" the planning effort.
- C. Distill comments---identify priorities.
 - 1. Bring this group back together.
 - 2. Keep testing ideas.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR ROLES in Economic Development and Preserving San Rafael's Quality of Life

N.E.X.T S.T.E.P.S

1. DEVELOP INTERIM
GUIDELINES/
POLICIES DOCUMENT

2. MASTER PLAN (Draft)
-- USE EXISTING RESOURCES

-- MORE COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT
-- DON'T "NICKEL + DIME
PLUG EFFORT
-- GOALS + OBJECTIVES
-- ACTION PLAN

3. DEFINE KEY
ISSUES

4. DISTILL COMMENTS -- ID PRIORITY + PLAN.
-- BRING THIS GROUP BACK
TOGETHER
-- KEEP TESTING IDEAS...

THIS TYPE OF SECTOR
HELPS SIGNAL SECTOR-PRIVATE

MASTER
PLAN
SHOULD TAKE
ACCOUNT OF
NODAL POINT

POINT OF
Major
Activity
--> How to
capture this
opportunity.

Existing
"Long Haul
Corridor" -- may
propose opportunity
at tail but this
must be studied.

SIGNALS
PRIVATE
SECTOR
SHOULD
WAKE
UP
DRAFT OR
PLAN...

ADOPT
ENTREPRENEURIAL
ATTITUDE:
ID TO SOLVE
Infrastructure
Problems, etc...

MUST LOOK
@ ALTERNATIVES
DUPNT STRATEGY...

COOPERATIVE
TRANSIT
STRATEGY TO
DOWNTOWN
DUPNT...

FORE "WHEEL"

PUBLIC SECTOR

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT
DISTRICTS

CONTROL OVER
TENANTS/USES

4TH STREET...
CONCENTRATE

UNDERSTAND THE
NUMBERS

TALK TO SMALLER
TALKIES -- TO GET
SOME IDEAS

e.g. Los Angeles
San Diego
Palo Alto

ACTIVE BUSINESS
RECRUITING

WHAT YOU CAN DO -- NOT JUST WHAT YOU CAN'T DO.

ACTIVE
"AGGRESSIVE" ROLE

HOW DOES
SAN RAFAEL
COMPARE
OTHER CITIES?

HOW DO WE
PERFORM
WHAT IS EQUITABLE
DO THIS COMBO

STUDY
NEW
APPROACHES

RE: Private/Public
Participation

ESTUDY ACTIVITIES
LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS
WHICH COULD
SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

INITIATE A
PROCESS P/
EXPLORE OPTIONS

PARTNERSHIP
OPTIONS

THINK IN
BROADER TERMS

BRING
EMPLOYERS
TOGETHER
TO FACILITATE
TRANSIT
ACT...

ORGANIZED
APPROACH
TO PROBLEM

PURSUES
JOINT
MARKETING
EFFORTS
P/DOWNOWN
P.g. Noprofit Association
Market
Special Events

Equitable
Distribution
of Costs/Benefits

ALL PARTS
OF
COMMUNITY
FR/STRONG
DOWNTOWN

ALL PARTS
OF
COMMUNITY
FR/STRONG
DOWNTOWN

ALL MUST ADDRESS
TRANSIT ISSUE -- SINCE
ALL CONTRIBUTE TO
PROBLEM

DOWNTOWN
MANAGEMENT
NONPROFIT ASSOCIATIONS
OF BUSINESSES

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES
GRAPHICS
ADVERTISING

BRINGS MARKETPLACE
TO COMMUNITY
Various Markets
Users

RE-POSITION
NORTHEAST
Regain Excitement
Provide Alternative
Retail Uses
This will minimize traffic
+ support downtown
this way...

Bring In
Ideas...
Based on
Information...

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GRAPHICS
ADVERTISING

BRINGS MARKETPLACE
TO COMMUNITY
Various Markets
Users

RE-POSITION
NORTHEAST
Regain Excitement
Provide Alternative
Retail Uses
This will minimize traffic
+ support downtown
this way...

Bring In
Ideas...
Based on
Information...

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APPENDIX

Reference Material Provided To the Consultants Before the Study Session

1. The Marin Countywide Plan: Economic Element
 Marin County Planning Department, 1985.
2. Central San Rafael Redevelopment Project Tax
 Allocation Bonds, Series 1985, Official Statement
 San Rafael Redevelopment Agency, 1985.
3. Profile of Marin County
 Marin Independent Journal, 1984.
4. Marin's Growing Shopping Centers
 Article from the Marin Independent Journal,
 September 18, 1985.
5. San Anselmo Seeks Revitalization
 Article from the Marin Independent Journal,
 August 19, 1985.
6. Introducing Marin County
 Bank of America publication, 1985.
7. Economic Forecast 1985: Marin County
 Bank of America publication, 1984.



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APPENDIX

Materials submitted in response to the questionnaire during the study period

1.

The Rural Community Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Community Development Program, 1960-1965

2.

Central San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Experiment Station
Agricultural Experiment Station, Central San Joaquin Valley
San Joaquin Agricultural Experiment Station, 1960-1965

3.

Office of Rural Development
Rural Development, 1960-1965

4.

Rural Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965

5.

San Joaquin Valley Rural Development
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965

6.

San Joaquin Valley Rural Development
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965

7.

San Joaquin Valley Rural Development
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965
Rural Development Program, 1960-1965

